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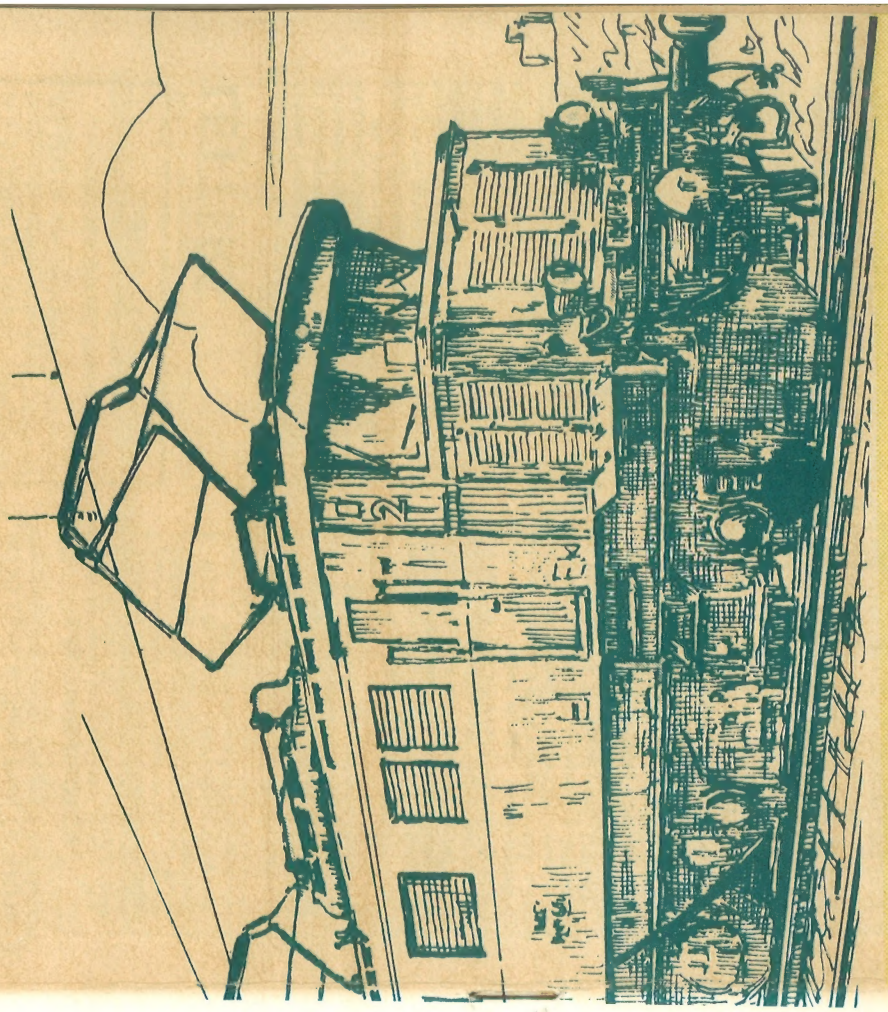

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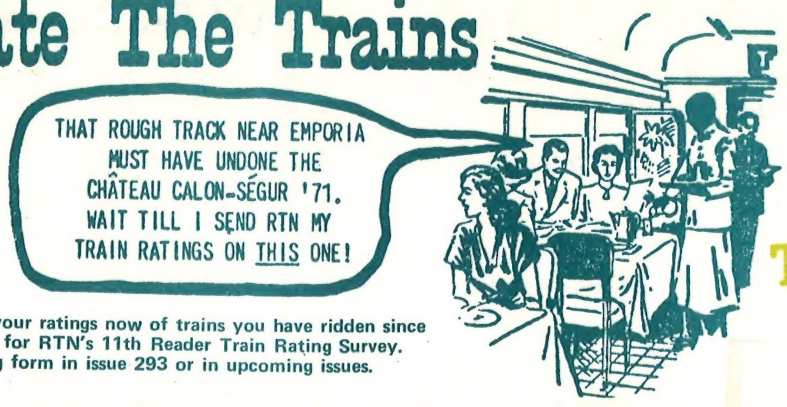

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LETTERS

The editorial in RTN 291 suggesting that Amtrak's corporate headquarters be moved out of Washington has merit, but in order to solve the new problems with rail passenger service, we must go further.

We must realize that Amtrak has become a typical Washington DC bureaucracy which has gained power at a frightening rate over the last few years—typical in the sense that like other bureaucracies it wants to create its own comfortable niche while giving in return as little service as it can get away with. Too many of us haven't seen this coming.

I watched the butchery of my state's service in 1981 with the loss of the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and the re-routing of the Seattle section of the EMPIRE BUILDER to the Wenatchee line. Later I watched Wyoming robbed of its service exactly the same way we were robbed of much of ours. And before either of these, Willmar, Morris and Breckinridge, Minnesota were stripped of their service without any sort of due process. You will note that two of these occurred under Alan Boyd, one under Graham Claytor. This shows that we should not blame Mr. Claytor for Amtrak's arrogant high-handedness.

Had anyone realized the significance of those early moves, we might have had two years to get going on lobbying Congress to restrict Amtrak's right to make route and service decisions. But too few did, and now the fish have gotten bigger.

After Wyoming came the SPIRIT—then St. Petersburg. Now Oklahoma has successfully if unfairly been denied service. President Claytor makes the excuse that if he had added to the deficit by expanding into Oklahoma, he would have had to add something like eleven new services. That's a bad excuse. Any bureaucracy that can depress a train's revenue with a badly-thought out re-route without the courtesy of notifying the state's Congressional delegation and make it stick for three years (EMPIRE BUILDER Wenatchee re-routing)... can hand a 10-year veteran U.S. Senator a bruising, humiliating defeat (Wallop of Wyoming)... can outfox the Florida Congressional delegation on a service downgrading that causes a hefty cut in revenues and in all seriousness tell one of the local Senators there was no mistake (St. Petersburg)... can utterly and completely defeat an Oklahoma Congressional delegation trying to force Amtrak to do what it should have done in the first place (Oklahoma service)... and can with a straight face ask Congress, albeit politely, to hand over the money and shut up... can do anything it jolly well pleases on route and service decisions, and in most cases need not even supply reasons for what it does.

At least the freshman Senator and Congressman involved in the EMPIRE BUILDER debacle in Washington State saw what they were up against. They quickly disseminated Amtrak's faulty reasoning for the service change, and ducked.

They realized what Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop later found out the hard way—that Amtrak will deal mercilessly with recalcitrant Senators and Congressmen, showing them who the REAL boss is when push comes to shove. How long will it be before Amtrak can run over the likes of Bob Packwood of Oregon and Robert Byrd of West Virginia? We know these Congressional powerhouses as the reasons the PIONEER and Portland section of the EMPIRE BUILDER, and the CARDINAL, exist. If you have a Mark Andrews of North Dakota on your side, and a Packwood, you can get the EMPIRE BUILDER made daily on no warning, in the dead of winter, going into the second worst recession in our history, and despite what at the time was weak ridership and a protest by Amtrak that it just couldn't be done. That's the way 7 and 8 went daily in early 1982. But without that political clout, the people in the Southwest can't get a daily SUNSET in the middle of summer with a world's fair on one end and an Olympics on the other, and about ten times the population in between!!

Rail Travel News, Vol. 14, No. 14. 2 July, 1984. Whole number 296. Copyright © 1984. by Message Media. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $19.00 per year; single copy 80¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Jack Ferry, Adron Hall, Kenneth Maylath, Peter Roehm, Ted Scull.

THE COVER STORY

Germany will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of its railways next year—the anniversary date is Dec 7, 1985. On that date 150 years before, the first railway between Nurnberg and Furth was born. In the coming anniversary year, Nurnberg will apparently be the center of activity, with numerous rail tours running from May to October. The German Federal Railway promises to operate historic steam, diesel and electric locomotives for the occasion, and to use vintage coaches. Our cover illustration was taken from a booklet published by the railway, which describes the tours and festivities. It is available from the German National Tourist Office, 747 Third Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York NY 10017; or 2 Fundy, PO Box 417, Place Bonaventure, Montreal, P.Q. Canada H5A 1B8. Ask for the "Jubilee Express" and for the booklet "Dampflokerinnerungen Reisen in die Gute Alte Zeit."

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is our annual summer vacation issue, meaning that the editor has been on vacation and that this issue is coming out later than usual. There will be about three weeks' lapse between the last issue and this one, rather than the normal two weeks or so. In return for your indulgence, the editor will refrain from telling you about his vacation, which didn't involve any trains. Our staff has not been totally inactive during this vacation period. If all goes well, all our U.S. subscribers will see a computerized label on this issue. The label will include, besides your name and address, the letter R followed by the number of the final issue of your current subscription. Please report to us any errors you find on your label. Thank you.

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And guess what—they get the same excuses about no daily EAGLE as we got about the EMPIRE BUILDER! Did you know that Amtrak is not expanding the EAGLE consist this summer, at least not officially? The EMPIRE BUILDER, with no special events on either end or in the middle, has been given a normal summer consist that year with two extra coaches, tho like the SUNSET it received no extra sleepers this year.

True, we now have the RIVER CITIES—which just happens to point directly toward the Doles' home state. Also, we have President Claytor talking cheerfully about Inland Route service between Boston and New York. That's fine, but there's no talk of what that will add to the deficit. Of course not—we're talking Northeast Corridor territory here. So much for the consistent national policy Federal Railroad Administrator John Riley said Mr. Claytor needed.

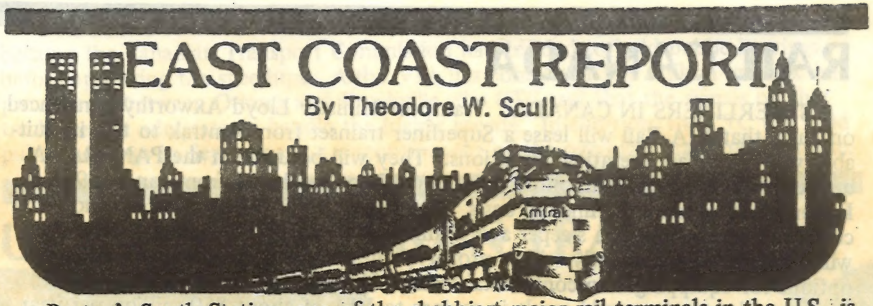
And, just for fun, let's compare the San Diego Metroliner with the GULF COAST LIMITED. Amtrak Marketing predicted 42 pm/tm for the GULF COAST, apparently trying to abort the service—this while Marketing was ramming the SAN DIEGO METROLINER down literally everybody's throat amid overwhelming evidence that it would not work. Ironically, the GULF COAST now averages something like 234 riders a day each way, while the SAN DIEGO METROLINERgets 48, only slightly above the Marketing prediction for the GULF COAST! Guess which train will die first. If you pick the Metroliner, you're probably hopeless and had better find another area of social activism.

Minneapolis attorney Andrew Selden, defending author Tom Nelligan's characterization of Amtrak as a government agency and criticizing President Claytor's response that it is actually a

(continued on page 18)

EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull



Boston's South Station, one of the shabbiest major rail terminals in the U.S., is finally receiving the $106 million needed to convert the MBTA-owned facility, used by Amtrak and the MBTA commuter and subway trains, into a modern and efficient transportation center. Phase one scheduled for completion by mid-1986, will see the renovation of the terminal building and the east wing and the construction of an entirely new west wing, concourse and elevated platforms. Later phases call for a new bus station, parking facilities, an office building and hotel, an exposition center, and a direct connection to the Red Line. At present, incoming rail passengers must walk outside the terminal to reach the subway entrance.

At North Station, where train service was suspended after a fire destroyed the Charles River trestle, an $11.3-million contract has been awarded to replace the bridge, and to rebuild the station's tracks, platforms and canopies. The scheduled completion date is Apr 20, 1985, earlier than predicted. Thanks to RTN reader Charles Bahne for these items. ★★★

Most SEPTA fares increased July 1 with the flat fare on Philadelphia's buses, trolleys and subways rising from 75 to 85 cents. Off-peak handicapped and peak senior citizen fares rose from 35 to 40 cents. Increases in the off-peak, weekly and monthly transit fares were scheduled for Jul 9 or Aug 1. Commuter rail fares, especially those in the outer zones, will be decreased Sep 1 in an effort to boost lagging ridership, currently 75,000 a day as opposed to 100,000 four years ago.

★★★

The seven (ex-PRR MP-54) Maryland DOT cars, mentioned in RTN 294, will be given to the B&O Museum in Baltimore (1), the National Capital Trolley Museum in Wheaton MD (2), Altoona Railroaders' Museum (1) and Historic Red Clay Valley (3).

★★★

In a July 8 Washington Post follow-up article that discussed the fierce competition among Eastern, New York Air and People Express in the lucrative NY-Washington market, Amtrak Metroliner Service has been making substantial inroads. Train ridership has risen 20.6% from Oct 1983 thru May 1984 (compared to Amtrak's 5.4% increase nationwide) and 26.2% in May alone when compared to last year (0.7 nationwide). Eastern and New York Air charge $65 peak, while Metroliner fare is $47, and the main market for all three carriers is business travel. People Express, with only six flights a day from Newark to National Airport, charges $27 off-peak and $40 peak, and its market is mainly non-business travel, a market that Amtrak also serves with its conventional trains, with an excursion fare of $56. Amtrak said the Metroliners carried about 3770 people a day in May between New York and Washington, or almost as many as Eastern and New York Air combined. These figures evidently include all Metroliner ridership, not just between end points.

★★★

The 7:30am train no. 57, the BEAR MOUNTAIN, weekdays from New York to Albany, will be discontinued at the end of July, according to Amtrak information on Jul 15. The Empire Corridor now loses its full-service status, with the first train for the state capital now departing at 8:45am, eliminating 1½ hours from the normal business day.

★★★

In Washington transit news, a federal judge approved Metro's plan to extend the Green Line from the Waterfront stop southwest across the Anacostia River into the low-income neighborhood of Anacostia, with a completion date in the early 1990s.

(continued on page 20)

RAIL CANADA

SUPERLINERS IN CANADA: Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced on Jul 6 that VIA Rail will lease a Superliner trainset from Amtrak to test its suitability in Canadian operating conditions. They will be used on the PANORAMA between Winnipeg and Edmonton from Sep 15 to Dec 1 and from Jan 1, 1985 to Easter, 1985 on an experimental basis. The trainset will consist of a locomotive, a coach, a baggage coach, a sleeper and a dining car. Axworthy said the experiment will take place concurrently with a prototype development program to evaluate options for equipping transcontinental trains. He said that the shorter train with more people per car would result in savings to VIA of about $50 million per year if the Superliners were introduced to transcontinental service permanently.

AN RTN READER, Chris Anderson of Philadelphia, received a reply this month from Transport Minister Axworthy to his inquiry about Ottawa-Toronto service. Axworthy said, "My mid-1984, VIA will have spent some $41 million to upgrade the rail infrastructure between Ottawa and Brockville. This improvement will allow a reduction in travel time of up to 55 minutes so that certain trains will be able to make the Ottawa-Toronto trip in four hours. VIA is proposing to discontinue the overnight train and its early morning Ottawa-Kingston bus service and replace them with an early morning all-rail service operating on an accelerated schedule." He said the change will be reviewed by the Canadian Transport Commission, with an opportunity for public input and objections. The CTC has evidently not yet decided whether to hold public hearings on the proposed change.

MONCTON-EDMUNDSTON TRAIN will begin operation in September rather than on Aug 8. VIA claimed equipment shortages is causing the delay. Transport 2000 President Guy Chartrand held a press conference recently in Edmundston, at which he criticized the delay. Rail advoctes believe that Canada's Federal election on Sep 4 could help stimulate action on the service. Rail supporters are being asked to contact their local candidates.

ONLY 27 LRC trains out of 50 were operational in the month of May. Critics find the basic design faulty, with wear becoming excessive above 90mph, so that maintenance costs skyrocket. They say there is no assurance that a second generation of such trains will lack these mechanical deficiencies.

MONTREAL-HALIFAX "ATLANTIC" should be returned, demands citizens of the Maritimes. The Board of Trade in Saint John, N.B. has collected 20,000 letters asking for the train's reinstatement. The Mayor of Saint John told reporters this month that she has telegramed Transport Minister Axworthy asking for a quick decision on the train. The ATLANTIC was discontinued among Transport Minister's cutbacks in 1981.

THE LRC DERAILMENT on the Toronto-Ottawa line Jun 21, reported last issue, was evidently the work of a 17-year old youth from Richmond. Altho suffering psychiatric problems, the youth was deemed fit to stand trial for the sabotage of a switch in Nepean that sent the 4-car train onto a spur line, slightly injuring 27 people.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION announced Jul 18 that the public hearing started Jun 18 on objections to a CN and CP proposal to acquire certain Canadian properties of Conrail of Philadelphia, will continue in London, Ontario Jul 30 to Aug 10.

RAILWAY AND PUBLIC officials and 37 passengers turned out for the inaugural on Jun 4 of same-day roundtrip rail service between Port Hawkesbury and Halifax. The scheduling allows a 6-hour layover in the capital city, Halifax.

HEAD-ON COLLISION Jun 18 between a freight and a work train resulted in the suspension of four crewmen on the British Columbia Railway. The wreck occurred about 15km north of Prince George, damaging eight locomotives, one of them a total loss.

FASTER OTTAWA-TORONTO runs scheduled for Aug 1 have been delayed because the Canadian Transport Commission has decided to hold public hearings before approving the speedups. Altho VIA has completed $38 million in track improvements between Ottawa and Brockville, the CTC said that the signals on that track are not adequate to handle the higher speeds. In addition, the CTC will hold public hearings in September on discontinuance of the overnight train on the route.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MARC (formerly Maryland DOT) commuter train 54 eastbound on the B&O main at Forest Glen MD on an early morning run Brunswick-Washington May 17. Photo by Alex Mayes.

REDWOOD REGIONAL RAILROAD Authorityhas been authorized by the California state legislature and becomes effective when the Northwestern Pacific Railroad is abandoned. The Authority will permit the four counties involved to acquire the line (provided funds are available) and to use it for commuter and/or freight operations. A San Rafael newspaper editorialized Jul 24 that the freight and commuter promoters need to get together to seek support for the line, and that it could be a great system if all goes well.

CITY OF AUSTIN, Texas has been making arrangements with four railroads that want to buy the local Southern Pacific line that SP wants to abandon, so it can obtain a share of the track usage for mass transit use. A decision on what to do with the line is expected from SP in early August.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI Railway on Jul 30 published its first schedule booklet since 1912. It had printed 160,000 copies of the schedule, which cynical riders immediately said won't be adhered to. In other Muni news, a $1.5 million out-of-court settlement was announced Jul 16 to a 65-year old woman who lost both legs in a Muni bus accident Jul 24, 1983. The Mayor of San Francisco on Jul 30 announced the offer of a $5000 reward to information on a passenger who threw acid into the eyes of a Muni driver on Jul 27.

TORONTO'S GO TRANSIT raised fares about 5% on July 1. The system announced plans for stepped-up service for the visit of the Pope Sep 14. A Royal visit scheduled for July 19-21 was postponed.

NEW YORK TIMES began a series of three front-page articles analyzing the present state of the city's subways, on July 30.

DOT SECRETARY DOLE said July 25 that developers and architects had been chosen to finish the $40 million renovation of Washington Union Station. In three years, said Dole, the station will be "a beautifully restored transportation center."

THE BOSTON MBTA is proceeding with rehabilitation of North Station, damaged by fire last winter. Summer of next year is the expected completion date.

SEPTA'S JULY 22 timetables do not show the station stop time at 30th Street for the 5:10pm outbound weekday express trip to Elwyn. The station stop time is 5:14, SEPTA said in an apologetic flyer.

AMTRAK HAS FOUR FATAL WRECKS DURING JULY

Amtrak and the safety of railroads suddenly became the talk of the public in July after four fatal wrecks occurred on Amtrak, three of them in the space of one week.

In brief summary, the wrecks were as follows:

- July 4 in Elgin SC a Florida train collided with a pickup truck at a crossing, killing the two occupants of the truck.
- July 7 at Williston VT at 7:07am the northbound MONTREALER derailed on a flood-weakened piece of roadbed, killing five persons and injuring 137.
- July 11 in McBee SC at 7:30am the northbound SILVER STAR struck a gasoline truck at a poorly-protected crossing, killing the engineer and the truck driver and injuring five others.
- July 23 at 10:45am the southbound SHORELINER and the northbound NEW ENGLAND ZIP collided headon on a viaduct in Queens, New York City, killing one person and injuring 125 others, some seriously.

The July 7 MONTREALER wreck occurred during a period of heavy rainfall which had washed away the roadbed under the Central Vermont Railway tracks over a gulley. This was one of the most violent Amtrak wrecks in recent years; because some of the cars fell into the 22-foot deep culvert, with one car landing on top of a slumbercoach. Most of the deaths were apparently in the slumbercoach. Two of the fatally injured were crew, and three were passengers. The railroad reportedly had no warning of severe weather conditions, even tho the National Weather Service had issued a flash flood warning before the accident. Also, it was found that the train did not have a working radio which could have received weather warnings. Consist of the wrecked train was engines 202 and 211; cars 1184, 2915 "Pacific Hills", 2083 (slumbercoach), 28302, 4729, 4715, 4606, 4704, 4730, 28301, 21880, 21867, 21839. The train was carrying 278 passengers.

In the July 11 wreck in South Carolina, the gasoline tanker truck exploded and burned for at least seven hours. Lead engine 386 was gutted by flame, and appeared to be a total loss. There were 309 passengers aboard, and four of them had minor injuries. The fireman in the cab suffered burns and broken bones. The train was traveling at 65 mph at the time of impact. A witness said that the truck driver did not stop before driving onto the tracks. The crossing was protected only by warning signs, and boxcars parked nearby may have made visibility poor.

The July 23 headon collision in New York City was believed to be the fault of a confused or inexperienced signalman in a tower, where he had worked only a few days, altho he had been an Amtrak employee for about 10 years. It was found that the signalman had traces of marijuana and cocaine in his urine, but officials said that it was highly unlikely that the small amounts found could have affected his actions at the time of the wreck. The collision occurred on a viaduct leading to the Hell's Gate Bridge. Both trains had to use one track, as a second was out of service for routine maintenance. A mixup in signalling put both trains on the same track in opposite directions. Their speed was not great at the time of impact, and none of the cars toppled over or leaned at a great angle after derailing. Consist of the southbound SHORELINER was engine 936 and cars 21079, 20008 (Amcafe), 21234, 21001 and 1243. Consist of the northbound NEW ENGLAND ZIP was engine 924 and cars 21108, 21084, 21026, 21142, 21883, 20125, 1365 and 1138. It is believed that some of the cars were damaged beyond repair. The vestibule of car 21084 was said to have been completely smashed in. Amtrak removed the last three or four cars off the ZIP to transport the slightly injured passengers to Penn Station. Amtrak ran a makeup train between New Haven and Boston, composed of engine 206 and cars 7608 and 7603 (clocker coaches assigned to New Haven to cover SVP 2000s when they are out of service).

See Mixed Train of Thoughts section for reaction to the accidents.

The Municipal Roller Coaster Runs Again

BY GLENN LEE

San Francisco's creaky old cable cars returned to their bigger-than-life status as a major California tourist draw June 21 in one of the biggest local public celebrations seen in many years in the Bay Area. Police estimated that nearly 100,000 persons were drawn to downtown San Francisco by the Big Event.

Of those, some 40,000 jammed Union Square adjacent to the Powell Street cable routes at 12 noon to hear Mayor Dianne Feinstein cheer the return of the cars, praising all involved—designers, contractors and laborers—for their major accomplishment, nothing less than a major eyebrow-raiser in our day, of completing the 20-month project of replacing all track and carbarn machinery on time and within budget.

The Mayor was accompanied by singer Tony Bennett, who warbled his most famous hit, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco", to a crowd which roared enormous approval. Bennett's lyrics lionize "the cable cars which climb halfway to the stars" and at one count in recent years had been translated into 43 languages, both immortalizing the 111-year old conveyances and helping provide The City with a lot of free tourist advertising.

After brave words by other municipal leaders-and-shakers, and a few light-hearted boos to the Urban Mass Transit Administrator who mentioned that the Reagan Administration supported cable cars, the Mayor and entourage departed by Powell Street single-ended cable car Number One northbound on Powell to California Street where an eastbound double-end California cable took the group to the eastern terminus of the California line at Market and Drumm Streets. Here another 15,000 persons gathered for a second short ceremony.

As with Powell Street, lined by police barricades and jam-packed from Market to the base of Nob Hill, California Street also was heavily jammed with happy, easy-going crowds from Grant Avenue (main street of Chinatown) to Market. Clear weather and a light breeze made weather conditions almost ideal.

Of the 34 (out of 40) cable cars which returned to the carbarn for the June 21 startup, 32 hit the street, almost all decorated in some fashion by their corporate sponsors, San Francisco businesses which had donated nearly $10 million—the local 20% match money for the 80% Federal grant which made the rehabilitation project possible for $58.6 million excluding another $2 million from the local Municipal Railway budget to rehabilitate the cars and also to paint them and do other "housecleaning" chores while the cable slots were being ripped up and replaced.

The project was billed as the largest single public works project in San Francisco since completion of the $1.5 billion BART project in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, the convenience to the public may have been much more. At times, writers described downtown San Francisco as resembling downtown Beirut at its worst, with many streets closed or barely passable.

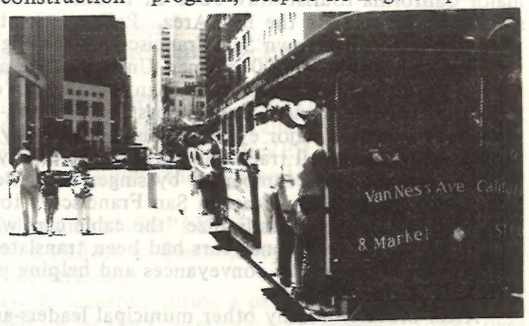
The reconstruction project had been brewing for several years. Altho the cable car routes are "frozen" into the city charter by a vote of the people, and thus cannot be discontinued unless by a popular vote, the Muni Railway management over the years has skimped on cable car maintenance (a similar program of neglect ruined the City's 550-bus diesel fleet). Thru the 1960s and 1970s, Muni Railway managers, such as John Woods, an avowed diesel bus enthusiast, continued earlier programs of patch-and-paste on cabel car system maintenance, resulting in a downward spiral of deterioration thru the 1970s.

Several major cable car accidents and a number of shutdowns of the system emphasized and re-emphasized that old components, including track structures dating to the late 1800s, could not continue indefinitely, especially under the brunt of heavy cable car traffic and pounding by heavy trucks and buses on roadbed built when the heaviest vehicles were horse-drawn.

Altho the California Street line was very well built by ex-SP rail baron and California Governor Leland Stanford, it had dated from Apr 10, 1878. The Powell Street route had been constructed on the cheap in 1887 and 1888 by the Sutro family, as part of a program to help funnel traffic to the family-owned Cliff House at the north end of Ocean Beach in the far west edge of the City. Some of the yokes, channel slots and related apparatus had simply vanished in places, leaving pockets of void beneath the streets. Many important devices to channel the moving cable ropes were either missing or inoperable.

By the late 1970s, it was a matter of either abandoning cable car operation, which would have entailed a major political battle in a city well-known for its divisive and fractionated politics; or of finding the money to rebuild the system completely, a program that would entail removing everything of the fixed plant except the walls of the cable car powerhouse.

It is of great credit to the city government that this was actually accomplished, and with no opposition anywhere in the political process, as well as with practically no citizen complaints during the reconstruction program, despite its huge scope.



On a hot July 1 Sunday afternoon a loaded cable car on the newly-rebuilt system starts up California Street from its terminus at Market. RTN photo.

The cable cars thus continue to run with honor, if not profit, in their home town!

For those familiar with the former cable car system, nothing has changed, The cars still rumble on their welded rail as they did on the old jointed rail; and the cable humming in the slots sounds no different than in the old system, even tho the odor of pine-tar lubricant has given way to a chemical developed by Chevron, called "hy-grip."

On the street, the old schedule patterns quickly were evident—slow operation with lots of layover time at each terminal, even tho lines at the terminal areas grew long and waits to board a cable very lengthy. This, according to Muni insiders, was due to a request by labor officials for an "easy" schedule, and a strong desire by Muni Railway manager Harold Geissenheimer not to rock the boat.

The cars, of course, run up a high accident rate, operating on streets where vehicle traffic and congestion has been high for years. On the evening of Jun 21, a California car collided with a taxicab at Mason and California as the taxi turned into the Mark Hopkins Hotel vehicle court. Passengers also may be victims, unfamiliar as they are with cable car customs and operations. First recorded injury to a passenger on the new system took place on the afternoon of Jun 21, only a few hours after the 2pm startup of regular servicefor the public when Ms. Angela Ambrosino of New York City received head lacerations after she leaned too far back in the front of a Powell car and was struck by a brake lever being pulled to the rear by the gripman. Thus, the cable cars can be a lawyer's best friend, despite a promise by City PUC President Nancy C. Levin at the startup festivities that we will now have another 100 years of safe and reliable cable car service. We'll just mark that off to puffery and civic pride.

Cable car buffs will note some major changes in the former track plant. The California line now features two new crossovers so that the double-end cars can be reversed at points other than the Market or Van Ness Avenue terminals. This will allow cars to return to schedule more rapidly after a service delay. A new downtown crossover, with a facing-point switch for eastbound cars, is located between Kearny and Montgomery Streets adjacent to the A.P. Giannini plaza at the foot of the 52-story Bank of America skyscraper headquarters building.

A second crossover is located between Taylor and Jones Streets, trailing point for westbound cars, between Grace Cathedral and the Masonic Temple. A third change is not so obvious—on the trackage used for cars traveling to and from the barn on Hyde Street; track not used in regular service. At Washington and Hyde, a new arrangement cuts the northbound track into the eastbound track on Washington Street used by Powell & Hyde cars at the intersection, and not halfway thru the block to the north as in the old plan.

Changes are more evident on the Powell lines, which have historically been operated by single-end cars using the famous "lazy Susan" turntables at the ends. At the outer turntables at Bay and Taylor Streets (Mason route) and Hyde and Beach Streets

(Hyde route) stub-end "dead tracks" have been constructed in which to store disabled cars. Movable casings on the slot allow for replacement of grips of both single-end and double-end cars.

Forward of each turntable is a crossover allowing double-end cars to change ends by switching directly from the outbound to inbound tracks. This permits operation of double-end cars in the future despite the fact that the double-enders are too long to fit onto the turntables.

At the Powell and Market turntable, a base for a crossover has been built, but the track is not yet in. A proposed track for disabled cars was stopped when the public discovered that the proposed spur would require relocation of a flower stand which has occupied the site for most of this century, at least.Apparently there are now no plans for a dead-track in this crucial zone, altho a siding-type dead track could conceivably be constructed on the west side of Powell one block north between Ellis and O'Farrell Streets.

Switchbacks have been constructed on both the single-end Powell lines—again a harbinger of coming operation of double-end cars on these routes. The first was a reactivation of the Filbert crossover on the Hyde line, a remnant of double-end operation on this route by the old O'Farrell, Jones & Hyde route which ceased in 1954. A brand new crossover is located at Mason between Broadway and Vallejo. Both switchbacks are trailing points for northbound cars.

At Columbus Avenue, the Mason-Taylor cars formerly operated on tracks in the center of the four-lane street. This increased accident chances where the northbound cars swung in Taylor Street from the center, or where southbound cars swung into Mason. The new track plan relocated the lines to the curb lanes, with grand, sweeping curves into Columbus at both ends, making car operation also less jerky.

(to be concluded next issue)

West Coast Report

SAN DIEGAN LINE ridership posted a 10.1% ridership increase in June for the seven daily roundtrips, in spite of the presence of the California Metroliner, which averaged only 48 passengers per day northbound and 44 southbound. Amtrak noted hopefully that the new Metroliner is "building in poularity." There were 123,598 revenue passengers on the SAN DIEGAN line in June, compared to 112,254 in June, 1983.

NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD abandonment efforts by SP are hitting snags as well as causing problems on the area's Highway 101. No freight runs on the railroad north of Willits CA because of SP's imposition of a $1200 surcharge per freight car to force a cutoff of business. The ICC initially rejected SP's demand to abandon the line north of Willits, and now the state PUC complains that the railroad is not cooperating in allowing surveys of the railroad. Meanwhile on Highway 101 between Willits and Eureka, much of which is a winding, two-lane road, officials are complaining that an upsurge in lumber trucks because of the railroad's lack of operation is causing more accidents, destroying the highway more rapidly, and frightening away the tourists. Apparently the only party seriously interested in purchasing the line is entrepreneur Bryan Whipple, but financial backing for such a venture will be hard to come by.

PETITIONS TO SAVE the Napa Valley branch of the SP are being circulated by engineer Lou Schuyler who envisions a Napa-St. Helena tourist line with steam locomotives. The petition would urgeNapa officials to obtain the line from SP, which wants to drop it.

NEWLY FORMED RAIL advocate group TRAC, at its Jul 14 meeting in Sacramento heard speaker Gerald Meral, Director of the Planning & Conservation League. TRAC decided to associate itself with that group, and the League will help lobby for rail service. TRAC aims in the coming year to get into operation the four new rail passenger services outlined in its flyer.

AMERICAN HIGH SPEED Rail Corp. in a Jul 23 announcement expressed satisfaction at the state Supreme Court's rejection of a suit against the Bullet Train project by Tustin and four San Diego County communities.

Better Times for the CARDINAL?

The CARDINAL recorded substantial ridership increases in June.

Amtrak has been increasing local advertising for the CARDINAL during the month of June. As many as three ads have appeared in a given week in local and regional newspapers. No radio or TV ads have appeared.

Local TV stations in Huntington, Charleston and Clarksburg WV have all filmed and broadcast feature stories in mid-June concerning the CARDINAL's scenic route between Huntington and White Sulphur Springs WV, thru the spectacular New River Gorge.

Because of a new same-day roundtrip excursion between Ashland/Huntington/Charleston and the White Sulphur Springs station, Amtrak stations in Huntington and Charleston have promoted (locally) the scenic roundtrip for people interested in taking a short train ride with family or friends. This option has seen a dramatic increase in passenger boardings at Huntington and Charleston for the Sunday (only weekend train) departure of train 50. As many as 140 passengers have detrained at White Sulphur Springs on early June weekends. Layover is one hour, 40 mins until the arrival of train 51.

Due to the unmanned status of White Sulphur Springs station and the unavailability of adequate waiting room facilities, late June saw a drop in White Sulphur Springs traffic from Huntington and Charleston, as passengers learn that there is only a 10x10 waiting room, no restrooms, no water fountain, and no train status available on the westbound no. 51. A drop in traffic to White Sulphur Springs has also been blamed on a lack of coach space being taken up by more long-distance thru traffic between Chicago and Washington. The original station building is now used by a realty company.

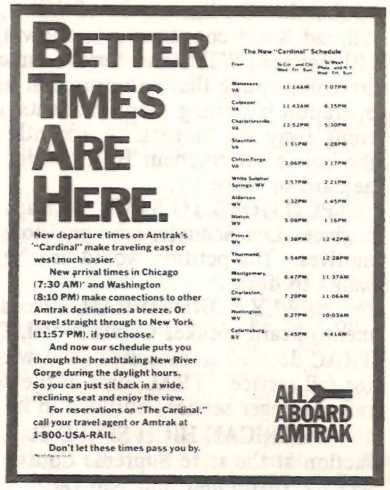
Both trains routinely carry 250 to 300 passengers between Washington and Cincinnati with an average of 125-150 boarding and detraining at Chicago. Traffic north of Philadelphia remains weak due to early morning hours, with an average of 30-40 riders out of New York and late evening arrivals in New York with about the same passenger loads.

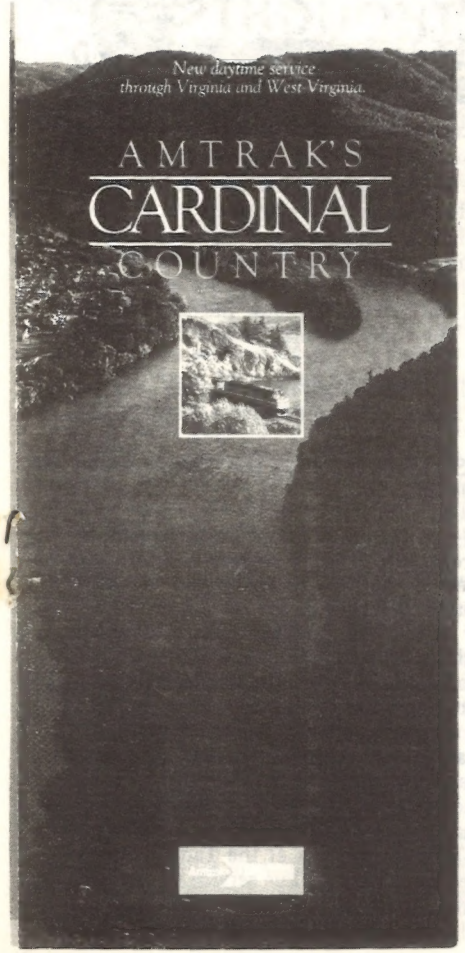
On June 11, Amtrak's Debbie Marciniack (Public Relations, Chicago) issued a press statement to AP and UPI wires that the CARDINAL was doing "very well" and had advance bookings "of 13% ahead of 1983 for the same period." Further, Amtrak "expects the route to generate $1 million more revenue" under the new schedule pattern.

Amtrak computer connection lists show the extent to which long-distance traffic has improved the rider totals on the CARDINAL. An average of 50-75 CARDINAL passengers at Chicago are now transfers to or from other long-distance Amtrak trains. The previous figure was virtually zero due to lack of connections.

The Amtrak Arrow computer is partly to blame for a lack of connecting passengers between train 50 and train 87/97. Under the new schedule, the eastbound CARDINAL is due to arrive Alexandria VA at 7:48pm, with the SILVER METEOR departing Alexandria at 8:47pm. According to Amtrak Marketing, this is a guaranteed connection between trains, and this was supposed to provide new, convenient service to Florida. However, due to programming errors in Arrow's availability displays, many CARDINAL route points show an overnight layover in Washington as the required option to Florida. Many city pairs remain "in error" and thus Arrow gives travel agents and the Amtrak Reservation Centers the first option of a Washington layover to train 82/92. When passengers hear this, they decide not to travel Amtrak. Yet CARDINAL route ticket agents are correctly routing people via Alexandria and have had some success in getting Amtrak programmers to correct the obvious errors. Northbound Arrow connections from 88/98 to 51 work without problems.

Details on white water rafting and a new Amtrak tour to the famous Greenbrier Resort at White Sulphur Springs have already been loaded into the Arrow computer. Reportedly, ski resort packages are under development for Winterplace, Snowshoe and Silver Creek Ski Areas near Prince and White Sulphur Springs stations. A fall ad campaign is also under study, and is being planned to attract riders on the CARDINAL to see the autumn foliage and to use the CARDINAL for ski weekends from Washington and Chicago/Cincinnati markets.





Under the June 17 Amtrak menu changes, the CARDINAL now offers its largest food selection ever. The menu for the trains is now the same as that on the CAPITOL LIMITED and CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, with steak, seafood, chicken, turkey and lasagna available for lunch and dinner. Employees and passengers report that altho full-service dining cars are still not on the train, the train's crews are using tablecloths, flowers and salt and pepper shakers and sugar bowls on the tables. As time permits, and depending upon employees, meals reprotedly have been served "at your seat" by the lounge car crew.

The new schedule puts the largest number of passengers aboard during peak meal periods. There, Amtrak had to expand the amount and selection of food and beverages. EAstbound: breakfast out of Cincinnati, lunch out of Charleston, and dinner out of Charlottesville. Westbound: breakfast down the Corridor, lunch out of Charlottesville, dinner thru the NEW River Gorge and Charleston. Late June has seen a number of incidents when both trains have run out of ice and various food items in the lounge car. Passengers have reported long lines and lengthy delays in being waited on and served.

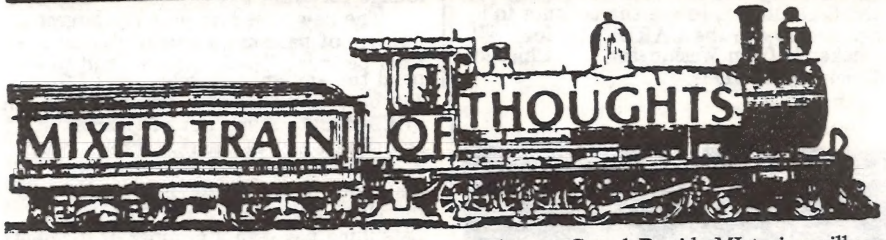
The biggest problem affecting the CARDINAL during June, and one which will presumably continue for a while, is the shortage of train equipment. At present each CARDINAL has a set consist of: one baggage car, one 10/6 sleeper, one lounge car, and six coaches. This equipment "maximum" has routinely restricted the train's ability to sell more space. Numerous incidents have occurred where the eastbound and westbound trains are sold out between Washington and Charleston WV, according to the Arrow computer. Amtrak employees in the field, on the CARDINAL line, have repeatedly requested that more coaches be added to the train, but have been told that six is the maximum available.

During late June, a second 10/6 sleeper has been operating on "every other trip", since only one has become available. Reportedly, the second sleeper has been at least half-full and sometimes full, especially between Huntington WV and Chicago in each direction.

A solution to the equipment shortage is not likely soon, since Amtrak is focussing on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS and the CRESCENT for the World's Fair.

It is Amtrak's Marketing Department which must approve an expansion of the number of coach lines assigned to any train, and since the CARDINAL's coach line is set at six, train managers and operations personnel who make up the trains are prevented from putting more than six coaches in the consist even tho one or two coaches might be available in the yards. The irony to this problem is that the CARDINAL must meet PM/TM criteria with only a tri-weekly operation, while other trains have a daily operation in which to attract customers. Logically, the CARDINAL should get as many coaches as would adequately allow maximum sales and then short daily long-distance trains (BROADWAY/CAPITOL, LAKE SHORE, etc.) one or two coaches three days a week to give to the CARDINAL.

Amtrak has just developed a CARDINAL brochure to be available for nationwide districution. Initial supplies of the brochure were sent to all CARDINAL-staffed stations in mid-June, and national availability should have been in early July. Rumor has it that a CARDINAL poster may be in the works to highlight the scenic attractions of the route, considered to be the most scenic in the Eastern United States.



THE PERE MARQUETTE, Amtrak's new Chicago-Grand Rapids MI train, will begin operation Aug 5, the first such service in 13 years. Partly financed by the state of Michigan, the train is named after the French missionary-explorer of the Great Lakes as well as a namesake post-World War II passenger train. The daily train leaves Grand Rapids at 7:30am, reaching Chicago at 10:30am. It leaves Chicago at 5:40pm, reaching Grand Rapids at 10:40pm. Intermediate stops are Holland, Bangor (South Haven), St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, and New Buffalo, all in Michigan, and Hammond/Whiting, Indiana. The train will make major connections in Chicago, Amtrak said.....

HAWAII AND ALASKA residents listed in telephone directories may now order Amtrak tickets by mail if they call at least 15 days before departure, Amtrak said. The Amtrak number if (213) 624-0171.....

A CONNECTING BUS now runs, thru Sep 3, to and from the "Grand Strand" at Myrtle Beach SC to the PALMETTO and Florence SC.....

★★★

GRAHAM CLAYTOR'S LETTER published here last issue, on the subject of St. Petersburg, has stimulated some strong rebuttals. Kevin Gregoire wonders why Claytor seems to be blaming him for bringing up the issue; the issue was actually raised by Congressman Bill Young and reported at length in the St. Petersburg Times. In addition, reader Charles B. Dew of Williams College, Williamstown MA, writes as follows: "As a native of St. Petersburg FL and a frequent rail traveler between New England and St. Petersburg, I have followed the Amtrak decision to terminate direct rail service to Clearwater and St. Petersburg with great care. Thus I read with great interest President Graham Claytor's letter to RTN defending the maintenance facilities and procedures used at Tampa. His letter failed to address several key issues, however: (1) The charges, reported in the St. Petersburg Times, of Tampa-based workmen at the Amtrak facility at Tampa that the shops there were not adequate to perform necessary maintenance. This situation came to light when one of the workmen lost a thumb as a result of an accident at the Tampa shops. (2) The loss of business as passengers reacted negatively to bus service as opposed to direct rail service. (3) The money lost on new facilities at Tampa while the well-equipped St. Petersburg shops stand unused. (4) The political loss Amtrak suffered

as Congressman C.W. "Bill" Young of St. Petersburg and members of the Florida Congressional delegation reacted angrily to Amtrak's decisions regarding Tampa termination of rail service. (5) The negative publicity Amtrak has received in the St. Petersburg Times as a result of their actions regarding St. Petersburg and Clearwater service. The Times is probably the best newspaper in Florida and is certainly one of the most widely read. All in all, Presideng Claytor's letter was noteworthy more for what it did not say than for what it said. A much more welcome communication would be one admitting that Amtrak had made a serious and costly blunder in eliminating direct rail passenger service to Clearwater and St. Petersburg and announcing the speedy resumption of such service".....

★★★

INLAND ROUTE SERVICE, Boston to Washington via Springfield MA, should start up with the fall timetable change. The Springfield Union published the following schedule for the coming service: leave Boston South Station at 6:30am, Springfield 8:45, arrive Washington DC 3:40pm; northbound, leave Washington 12:30pm, Springfield 7:30pm, arrive Boston 9:50pm. Intermediate stops in Massachusetts are Springfield, Worcester, Framingham, and Wellesley (an MBTA stop). The northbound train might use thru cars from the COLONIAL.....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN does not want to allow any more special trains on their lines. Deeply chagrined are the people in Washington State whose annual Christmas special to Leavenworth WA was ridden by 1900 people last year, and for which 1400 have already signed up this year. Rail advocates are asking concerned citizens to write their state and federal congressmen and senators, and to the BN management requesting that these trains be continued. Apparently negotiations between Amtrak and BN over the terms of special train movements has reached an impasse. The Leavenworth trains are promoted by Port Orchard Travel Service, 738 Bay St, Port Orchard WA 98366; telephone 206-876-7292.....

★★★

AMERICAN AIRLINES AND Amtrak in late July announced an agreement which will link the two companies' automated reservations systems by early autumn. A similar Amtrak agreement already is in effect with TWA. The more than 8200 subscribers to SABRE, which American Airlines calls "the nation's premier computerzied travel system," will be able to query Amtrak's ARROW system for schedules, rates, services and availability on Amtrak trains and to book confirmed reservations. In a later phase, they can generate computer-printed tickets for Amtrak travel.....

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR arrived in Chicagoon June 14 at 2:15am, scheduled to arrive June 13 at 4:15pm. Amtrak could not put passengers up in hotels overnight, as none was available due to a convention in town involving over 60,000 people. Amtrak allowed the train to remain in the station until 7am so passengers connecting to other trains could sleep on it. The diner was kept open all night for snacks and beverages. Reader Fred Morimoto, who was aboard the train, reported that the staff remained cheerful despite this extra service period required of them. Amtrak passed out an explanatory letter to arriving passengers, apologizing for the situation. While in the station overnight, engine 306 was assigned to the train to maintain headend power. The 13-car train carried three sleepers.....

THE ALASKA RAILROAD is expected to become the property of the state in Jan 1985. FRA Administrator John H. Riley on Jul 12 presented a letter of certification to Alaska Governor Bill Sheffield in a ceremony in Anchorage, indicating the state is expected to satisfy the requirements to date for the transfer from federal ownership of the railroad.....

GOURMET MAGAZINE'S AUGUST issue contains an article on the narrow-gauge railways of Austria.....

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN might ride Amtrak to the Republican convention in Dallas in August, reports columnist Larry King in USA Today.....

BERKSHIRE SCENIC RAILWAY startup date was July 28, not July 21 as reported previously.....

AMTRAK'S FOUR WRECKS in July set off a media debate on the safety of railroads. The accidents by chance closely coincided with the DOT's announcement that it is cracking down on drug and alcohol use among railroad employees. (There was no indication, however, that drug or alcohol use played any part in the Amtrak wrecks, but the two topics sometimes became joined in media discussions.) The National Association of RR Passengers on July 11 called on the FRA to require railroads to (1) monitor weather reports continuously; (2) inspect–during flood alerts–track segments known to be at risk in heavy rains; and (3) consider whether restrictions should be imposed on the operation of trains without functional radios. In a letter to FRA Administrator John H. Riley, NARP President John R. Martin said that if Central Vermont had taken the lead set by BN after the Emerson, Iowa flood and derailment of the SF ZEPHYR in 1982, the MONTREALER derailment might have been avoided. The BN began constant weather monitoring at that time by tying in its central dispatching offices with the National Weather Service by means of electronic scanners. Martin said it was "outrageous" that all railroad managements have not voluntarily begun to monitor weather reports, and concluded that "apparently we need a new federal regulation which would require just that." The newspaper USA Today on Jul 25 devoted its entire editorial page to the topic of train safety. (See Quotes of the Week for an excerpt from its main editorial.) One of the most interesting contributions to the page was from guest columnist Robert J. Church, a railroad history writer, who noted that back in the 1950s we might have chosen the railroads to subsidize instead of opting for the Interstate Highway system. We said we need innovative departures from current attitudes about transportation in this country. If the seven citizens interviewed by USA Today are representative of people at large, the citizenry was at least half-impressed in a negative way by the news of the Amtrak wrecks. The paper ran a cartoon of an Amtrak train with the engine numbered 1313 and labelled the "Starcrossed Limited." The San Francisco Chronicle the same day ran a cartoon of an Amtrak train running off a roller coaster.....

AMTRAK'S EQUIPMENT SHORTAGE has become more acute after the four July wrecks. Slumbercoach 2083 was demolished in the MONTREALER wreck, and has led Amtrak to discontinue slumbercoach service on the CAPITOL LIMITED because of a shortage of cars..... ★★★

AMTRAK SMOKING POLICY was revised July 1. The primary change is that now there is no smoking on any reserved long distance coach, except in the rear six rows on the upper level of Superliners. On unreserved trains with 8 or more coaches, two cars will be smoking cars; wit h 4-7 cars, one car next to cafe will be smoking; when less than 4 coaches, smoking in a portion of one coach as designated.....

SALE OF CONRAIL is now down to three bidders, according to insiders. The DOT reportedly favors Alleghany Corp., Loews Corp., and a group headed by J. Willard Marriott Jr., the hotel magnate. The sale probably won't occur before 1985.....

THE SILVER PALM might get a flag stop at Okeechobee FL. Amtrak agreed to study the possibility this month.....

SEATTLE & NORTH COAST Railroad Co. on June 30 lost its authority to run its Olympic Peninsula rail line, leased from the bankrupt Milwaukee Road. The S& NC had gone bankrupt also. A Pacific RR Society excursion on the line was the last passenger movement.....

FLORIDA DOT STUDY has found that a bullet train linking Miami, Orlando and Tampa would do nothing to reduce highway congestion and save taxpayers highway construction costs. But bullet train supporter John Parke Wright insisted that "If we don't take an innovative approach, we will become another New Jersey or Los Angeles low-quality-of-life center".....

AUTO TRAIN PATRONAGE hit a low point in late July, reports A-T watcher Robert Clark. The first half of the month the train had been running around 65% of capacity, but dropped to 40-50% after that.....

DALLAS TO MERIDIAN MS Amtrak link is being talked up in the South. The route would allow coast-to-coast travel along the Southern tier, among other things.

 News in this issue is updated thru July 31, 1984.

CARS & CONSISTS

***"Piedmont Limited" NRHS-RRE escursion train, Alexandria VA-Charlottesville VA Jul 15: engine 4-8-4 611, N&W tender 220165, N&W aux. tender 220166; cars (all SR unless indicated) N&W 1407 tool & recording, 726 "William J. Purdie Jr.", 1070 "W. Graham Claytor Jr.", 844, 845, 843, 841, 842, 662, 4061 "Queen and Crescent Club" souvenir car, 36, N&W 540, N&W 539, 1006, N&W 1069 "Missionary Ridge", 1086, 1087, 1068, 3659, 1067, N&W 536, N&W 531, slpr "Lake Pearl", slpr "Dover Harbor", obs RRP 3302.**

***COAST STARLIGHT, train 14, Oakland Jul 11: engines SP 3201 (off at Oakland), Atk 240(?) off at Oakland, Atk 204 & 241 on at Oakland; cars 1266, 1178, 39900, 32011, 32002 "Edward L. Ullman", 38035, 33011, 31007, 34052, 34097, 35001, 34004, 39948 off at Oakland, (off at Oakland:) SP 141 "Oakland", SP 140 "Stanford", SP 150 "Sunset".**

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"They are still one of the safest ways to travel, but the nation's railroads have been hit with a wave of accidents that threaten their reputation for safety...

"Taking the train is usually a safe, pleasant experience. With strong government regulation and better industry supervision, there is no reason why it can't be that way all the livelong day."

—From USA Today editorial, July 25.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"8:00 pm. Great Railway Journeys of the World/"Confessions of a Train Spotter" Comedian/actor Michael Palin journeys through Britain aboard a variety of classic trains including the famous 'Flying Scotsman' steam locomotive and the 'Inner-City 25.' "

—TV listing for July 16 in a Minneapolis paper.

(On a tour of the decaying metropolis?)

RAIL FANTRIPS

Weekends & holidays thru Sep 3: Steam excursion trains Old Sacramento to Miller Park on SP Walnut Grove branch line, 3-mi RTs. Lv hourly 10am-4pm. $3, child $2. Calif. State Railroad Museum, 111 I St, Sacramento CA 95814. (916) 445-4209.

Aug 11: Full moon open air train & bus excursion along Mississippi, double-deck bus, SL&CR RR open cars. 4 1½-hr tours $10 ea. Lvs Broadway at Riverview. Amer. Ass'n of Railroaders Inc., 3422 Osage St, St. Louis MO 63118. 752-3148.

Aug 18: Morgantown Special, rare mileage over Pope's Creek Branch to Potomac Elec. Power Plant at Morgantown MD. Starts & ends at Washington Union Sta, 8:35am-5:55pm. $38. Baltimore Chap, NRHS, PO Box 10233, Baltimore MD 21234. Visa & M/C.

Aug 18: State Fair Flyer, Chicago-Joliet-Springfield RT. $51, child $33. Amfleet, or first class section @ $109 (incl full-length dome & Skytop obs car, complimentary breakfast & dinner. 20th Century RR Club, 509 W. Roosevelt Rd, Chicago IL 60607. 312-829-4500.

Sep 8: Grape Escape Express, one-day RT from Chicago to Michigan winery tours & festival. Lv 8:30am, back 10pm. $55, child $35 (incl dinner). Visa & M/C. 20th Century RR Club, 509 W. Roosevelt Rd, Chicago IL 60607.

Sep 28-30: British Columbia Special. 3-day excursion Portland OR-Vancouver BC. Route of former PAC. INT'L. Optional BC Rwy trip. Hotel Vancouver incl. $240 ea double, $299 single. Pacific NW Chap, NRHS, Room i, Union Station, Portland OR 97209. Visa & M/C.

Sep 28-30: Narrow Gauge Train to Yesterday. Jet to Denver & to Durango, ride Silverton steam train, two nights at Rodeway Inn. Motor to Ouray, sightseeing, motor to Grand Jct. Jet back. $580 & up. Amer. Ass'n or Railroaders Inc, 3422 Osage, St Louis MO 63118.

Sep 29: excursion from Baltimore to Martinsburg WV via B&O old main line. Info from: Baltimore NRHS, Box 10233, Baltimore MD 21234.

Sep 29-Oct 10 or Oct 3-14: Canada Westfrom Chicago and Michigan. Incl Vancouver, Victoria, VIA'S CANADIAN. $895. America by Rail, 16168 Center Road, East Lansing MI 48823. 517-339-8854.

Oct 5-7: New England Autumn Adventure. Jet to Boston. Tourist trains, Maine, Vermont, Mass., New Hampshire, Atlantic Cliffs, White & Green Mts, etc. $648 ea double, $688 single. American Ass'n of Railroaders, 3422 Osage St, St. Louis MO 63118.

Oct 27: Excursion from Baltimore to York PA via former WM—first passenger train in many years. Info: Baltimore NRHS, Box 10233, Baltimore MD 21234.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

LETTERS (continued from page 4)

railroad, correctly called Amtrak "a unique, out-of-control hybrid." We as passenger rail advocates should be carefully documenting all the mistakes, the denials of service, the stupidities. We should be preparing to show Congress that Amtrak must be guided by the hand toward constructive route and service decisions.

Amtrak is virtually Graham Claytor's personal railroad now—and he really is not all bad. But he won't expand the system, either. If we don't set to work soon, it will be only a matter of time before Amtrak gains the power to discontinue any service anywhere in the country at will and without warning. It's just too bad we didn't sweat the small stuff there and four years ago while there was still time.

Rocky Shay
Seattle, Washington

I would like to respond to the article "Report on the Grand Rapids Line" by Duane W. Roller in RTN 294. I currently work for Amtrak and have for over a decade, being what is called here an "old-timer." However, I am not a company man by any means. I can remember the 20th CENTURY from my childhood (at La Salle St. station) and I rode the genuine CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR on Aug 22, 1963 and have the ticket stubs to prove it. So, I can remember railroads being properly run. At any rate, I am not satisfied with the current state of affairs in this company as regards new services (among other things).

Mr. Roller was astonished (as I am) to find no preparation for the Grand Rapids train tak=ing place in June. Considering the startup date has been pushed back three times for reasons unknown to us here at the company, it will be a modern miracle if it gets underway on Aug 5 as planned. As usual, the railfans and local newspapers know well in advance of service changes, adjustments, etc. We in my office are usually the last to know (a need-to-know basis?).

But this is only typical of the usual way things have been done around here since I walked in the door a decade or more ago. If this train fails, it probably will not be so much from lack of support or ridership, as, from my viewpoint, due to deliberate corporate and managerial ineptitude and footdragging. It will not be because of "real" delays due to government or railroad "interference", imagined, implied or otherwise.

A good case in point would be the former Chicago-Peoria service that was recently terminated. We at my office were advised that the reason service was terminated (after less than 18 months of operation and millions spent on track and facilities) was poor ridership. This may have been a factor, but... I was informed by a customer some time later (after the discontinuance) that there was a rape in the parking lot of the East Peoria depot, several muggings and repeated auto vandalism. She said this was well-publicized by the Peoria newspapers, which I'm sure had a detrimental effect on ridership. So, Mr. Roller's fears about the location of the Grand Rapids depot are probably well-founded.

Please, dear editor and reader, do not assum anything with regards to Amtrak, including the premise that Amtrak management knows what it is doing, in a business sense, or knows as much as 25% of what is going on in the field. They simply do not know, or worse do not care. They spend most of their time justifying their phoney-baloney makework jobs. John Kneiling said about ten years ago that Amtrak was just a makework scheme, and truer words were never spoken. There is a saying among management: "When in doubt, lie your way out and also "When in a bind, claim you don't remember." Or "They make those decisions in Washington; we don't have anything to do with it." This is precisely the reason for the Hon. Collins and Yates looking into Amtrak. Unfortunately this letter has turned into a diatribe. I am trying to remain objective, but all this unrealized potential of Amtrak's makes my blood boil. It is a case of lousy management, pure and simple. I am leaving the company soon to pursue a different career. I simply can no longer rationalize my love for railroading into a conscious effort to do a creditable job here. So, let me provide you with a bit more insight.

It is my opinion, and I'm sure it is shared by others inside and outside the company, that Amtrak was set up to fail in 1971. It has been thru the miraculous efforts of a small cadre of dedicated employees, fans and lobbyists that Amtrak in any form exists at all. I am for a well-run, efficient and comfortable long-haul passenger service in this country. Am I asking too much? One thing in my mind is certain: As long as inept and apathetic management and employees control and run Amtrak, the idea of good passenger train service in America can never come to pass. My 12 years' experience at the company show that. Maybe Amtrak has come a long way, but it has come no further than the morons managing it have allowed it to come (and that is a mediocre level, at best).

If Mr. Roller or the editor would like further examples or insights, I will be glad to provide them. I have asked that my name and address be withheld by my request so that I may keep my job a little longer (read: reprisals). I must pay for my trip to see SP 4449. I remain a loyalist.

Name withheld
Illinois

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RATE THE TRAINS!

Send RTN now your ratings of the trains you rode during your summer or late spring travel. See last issue for a train rating form. Ratings sent now will appear in our next survey, to be published shortly after the October timetable change. Write: Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EAST COAST REPORT (continued from page 5)

There is still no certainty that the full 101-mile system will be completed. On Jun 29, as best as Metro could determine, 21-year old Karen Jones became the 500 millionth paying passenger since the first Red Line segment opened on Jul 29, 1976. The billionth rider is expected sometime in 1988.

UMTA has agreed to grant $250,000 for a feasibility study on running trolleys from Foggy Bottom Metro station into Georgetown, with a possible spur line up Wisconsin Avenue and over to Georgetown via P Street. The last cars ran on Wisconsin in 1959.

★★★

While construction work has delayed weekend trains on the NE Corridor between Penn Station and Newark, Sunday PATH riders in July to and from Newark have had to switch to buses between Harrison and Journal Square while the Hackensack River Bridge was undergoing repairs. Announcements in the PATH station referred to the bridge's owner as NJ Transit, while the PATHWAYS July newsletter had Conrail listed as the proprietor.

At Penn Station, New York on Jul 14, an empty NJ Transit train was set in motion from track 8 by an Amtrak inspector and it collided with an inbound NJT local from Matawan. Sixteen passengers were injured, and the inspector was suspended pending an investigation.

The Long Island Rail Road added a Saturday morning parlor car on Jul 14 to its 8:19am train from Jamaica to the East End (7:58am from Penn). A complimentary continental breakfast is served. The LIRR reports that its Friday parlor car service is often sold out by Wednesday.

At Grand Central, Metro North maintenance employees are complaining about being eaten alive by fleas, a problem apparently caused by a large wild cat population in the terminal's network of tunnels. The area is being fumigated.

The New Haven Line printed a new peak-period outbound weekday schedule sheet to reflect changes, from Jul 9, in departures from Grand Central to provide more seats for its riders. Metro North announced Jul 17 that with a $5 permit its trains will carry bicycles, except during rush hours and at certain holiday periods. The LIRR has already been doing so for a year.

Metro North's Summer of Fun folder includes packages (rail, bus and admission) to Rye Playland, the Yonkers Raceway and the New York Botanical Gardens.

★★★

A rash of fires (120 so far this year) in the switch boxes of some of the Transit Authority's subway cars has resulted in over 100 cars being removed from service. I spotted smoke under an IRT no. 4 Express that I was about to board at 14th St., and the conductor removed all the passengers.

A TA conductor (and RTN reader) reported that he was assaulted by a passenger when he ordered his RR train out of service after the door indicator system failed on one half of the equipment, He said it took 45 minutes to convince the last passengers to leave. In addition, he reported that running times for all trains will be increased by 5-10 minutes because of slow orders and that about 10% of the platform conductor jobs will be eliminated. Earlier, the Transit Authority had made a survey of these employees and found that half of them could not be found at their posts.

★★★

During the week of Jul 9, I taught a course on New York to out-of-town senior citizens at Stevens Institute in Hoboken. The course included walking tours of Manhattan and Brooklyn. I moved between 17 and 35 people on 16 different PATH and TA subways (A, AA, CC, D, E, N, RR and no. 1 lines) without a single delay or problem, thanks to normal transit operations. In addition, I used two subways and the PATH each way to Hoboken over the same 5-day period and I experienced only one 15-minute delay on the RR and one 10-minute delay on the PATH. The surroundings may not have always been beautiful, nor were all the trains air conditioned, but we got where we were going swiftly and efficiently.

On Monday, Jul 16 I made a round trip to Philadelphia, riding down on a packed PALMETTO at 8:45am and returning on a lightly-loaded TIDEWATER at 9:19pm. No. 89 was seven minutes late, and 96 was right on time.

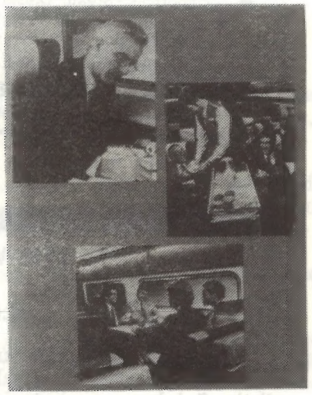
(Mr. Scull's column will not appear next issue; he will be traveling in Europe.)

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

JUNE 1984 DATA

(First column is number of riders; second is % change from 1983)

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR		
METROLINERS	106,445	16.4
NE CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	512,457	3.3
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	21,105	12.4
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	203,326	-2.3
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	60,340	-19.3
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR	903,673	1.6
SHORT DISTANCE		
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	74,345	11.3
CHICAGO-ST. LOUIS	28,307	10.2
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	12,133	-2.6
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	35,289	0.5
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	10,795	-8.7
CHICAGO-QUINCY	6,418	26.3
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	121,322	8.8
SEATTLE-PORTLAND	8,004	82.7
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	13,157	-23.5
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	26,529	47.3
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	6,313	-3.0
CHICAGO-PT. HURON-(TORONTO)	10,043	-3.4
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	9,449	0.1
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	17,551	-12.7
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	6,387	45.9
PITTSBURGH-PHILADELPHIA-NYC	9,362	33.6
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	--	-100.0
MIAMI-TAMPA	4,687	4.2
MOBILE-NEW ORLEANS	13,422	0.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	413,923	9.2
LONG DISTANCE		
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	9,494	10.4
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	62,365	1.7
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	32,672	26.1
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK	9,655	18.3
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	51,611	27.2
CHICAGO-OAKLAND/L.A./SEATTLE	76,502	39.5
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	30,348	15.2
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	24,362	40.8
CHICAGO-TEXAS	12,119	28.1
NEW ORLEANS-LOS ANGELES	12,429	56.4
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	58,914	28.8
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	37,501	13.0
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	8,576	6.5
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	13,785	-0.7
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	34,453	31.5
KANSAS CITY-CENTRALIA-NEW ORL	14,288	13.3
AUTO TRAIN (LORTON-SANFORD)	6,515	0.0
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	493,389	23.9
SPECIAL TRAINS	4,720	56.8
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,817,695	8.8



Amtrak posted a good month in June, with overall ridership up 8.8. The ridership figures for May were published in RTN 294.

Note also that long distance ridership was up 23.9%, short distance up 9.2%, and NE Corridor up 1.6%.

Leader among the long distance trains was the SUNSET LIMITED, with an increase of 56.4%. One would presume that this was due to the presence of the World's Fair in New Orleans. Second highest was Chicago-New Orleans, with a 40.8% jump.

In short distance, Seattle-Portland again made the best showing in terms of improvement with an 82.7% increase. Second was the SAN JOAQUIN route with 47.3%. The minus 100% for L.A.-Sacramento reflects the discontinuance of the SPIRIT OF CALIF.

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THE WORLD'S FAIR AND RETURN

BY WALT STRINGER
(CONCLUDED FROM LAST ISSUE)

The climb of Soldier Summit was slow and I enjoyed the steak dinner with all the fixin's on my last night out. On the west side the other reason for D&RGW's closure became apparent—two landslides, one small and one quite large, with earthmoving equipment still hard at work and a slow order in effect. Then came the real treat of the journey—the new D&RGW main line and the remains of Lake Thistle. At 8:30, west of Rio crossovers, it began—first a growing water line across the valley, then several destroyed homes and the old road and rail beds. We went onto the new railroad, with the new highway well above us, then the main Thistle Valley and a very distinct high water line above the dam. The lake was drained recently, exposing the original rail, road and home sites. Then thru the right hand tunnel and down a grade of 2.2%, the earth all terraced out, looking back at the large earth dam, still considered unstable. The magnitude of this event and recovery efforts is simply awesome.

We reached Provo at 8:55, noted flooding in Utah Lake, and then made a hot run to Salt Lake City, passing the D&RGW depot at 9:45. We stopped about ½-mile north of the UP station (about 100 yards west of it) at 9:50, and UP SW10 1214 tied on the rear and pulled us over east and south until we were outside the D&RGW station on UP's Provo subdivision (where the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR used to wye at night). We then pulled ahead to track 2 for an early 10:03pm arrival—there's plenty of padding in this schedule!

One PA announcement was made at 9:30 to get people back to their proper cars for switching. The UP station was quite busy with people, and I enjoyed, as always, the murals on the walls, as well as a new display on the history of the station.

Here is how Amtrak operates its Salt Lake hub westbound: (1) No. 5 arrives facing north on track 2, and the switcher cuts the four rear cars, to be placed on rear of 25 and 35. No. 5 departs backwards, pulled by switcher, then heads onto the WP. (2) No. 25 sits facing north on track 3 (farthest outside). Consist June 8 was engine 299, cars 38012, 31042, 34035. It departs first, straight out. (3) No. 35 sits on track 1 facing north (next to depot). Consist June 8 was engines 251 & 231; cars 1176, 39916, 34064, 38024. After the switcher pulls no. 5 out, it does the same with no. 35, which heads west to the UP. Supposedly after June 15 the diner and last coach of 35-36 go to Denver, meaning a 6-car switch at Salt Lake. Eastbound, things are reversed and possibly a little different—I'll check that out this summer or fall.

Our no. 5, now lighter by four cars and many passengers who had been placed in our coaches for 25 and 35, left at 11:07 (7mins late), after no. 25 had left 10mins late (baggage was the culprit). I greeted the WP conductor and was amazed to learn that the entire crew works thru to Winnemucca—400 miles—probably the longest engine crew run I've ever heard of.

I awoke at 3:10am to see the Elko Amshack southeast of town and check out the new 2.8-mile line relocation around south of town—it rides well, and Elko looked like a jewel of brightness in the dark of the desert night. I awoke again at 5:15 at Golconda, still on the paired track, and we met one eastbound SP freight. Golconda is SP milepost 435 but WP 550, to further confuse matters. The track was rough, and a few riders were still recounting the dinner delays last night.

There was a beautiful desert sunrise behind us as we reached Winnemucca at 5:35am, to gather two passengers and the SP crew. We passed Lovelock at 6:55am, with two SP SD9s and a nice depot present. We then caught a 5-mile slow order over the Humboldt sinks, which are flooded from the surrounding snowy peaks and the Humboldt River—who would ever expect a flood in Nevada?

Breakfast was pancakes and juice,and the crew was taking bets on what would be left for lunch, since the 400+ crowd from Chicago had really eaten mucho food. We arrives Sparks at 8:33am, and an SD9 put coach 34062 on the rear for the Reno -S.F. crowd. We were away quickly at 8:43, and left Reno with 100 or so more folks at 8:58, 35mins late. The climb to Norden was uneventful, leaving Truckee at 9:51. I cussed the Roseville dispatcher as he lined us up west of Truckee to take the big tunnel under Donner Summit rather than the scenic route over the top—this saves time but there goes a great piece of scenery and snowsheds.

Passing Norden with its snow at 10:20, we slowly came down the west side, meeting two eastbound freights with piggybacks and single helper engines. Colfax came at 11:55, then Auburn at 12:25. Then came several red blocks and a tie replacement area, and we were by Roseville at 1:15, Elvas at 1:35, and met no. 6 in the Sacramento station at 1:41pm—it was fun to look over at our countepart passengers as we sat together.

Leaving at 1:47, we rolled quickly to Davis and Suisun on this beautiful day, arriving Martinez at 2:57, where we sat for a bit trying to locate passengers who didn't get off. Lunch turned out to be a hamburger (they were out of cheese) with garnish and milk. Our final Oakland arrival was at 3:42pm, just 12mins late, after spectacular views of Mt. Tamalpais, the S.F. Bay, and of course the Golden Gate on a fogless day. Eastshore Lines hauled us over the bridge with commentary (a second bus, "Amrail", with more people and checked bags would follow), and I was free at 4:10. Out front of Transbay Terminal, were Muni no. 1 and later the Boat Tram, as I awaited Samtrans to the airport and a United DC8 back to San Diego.

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